

# Impaired Driving is a Deadly Threat to America's Families

**A**fter several years of improvement, more recent statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that impaired driving-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995, from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. America is at a crucial point, requiring all of us to do more if we are to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

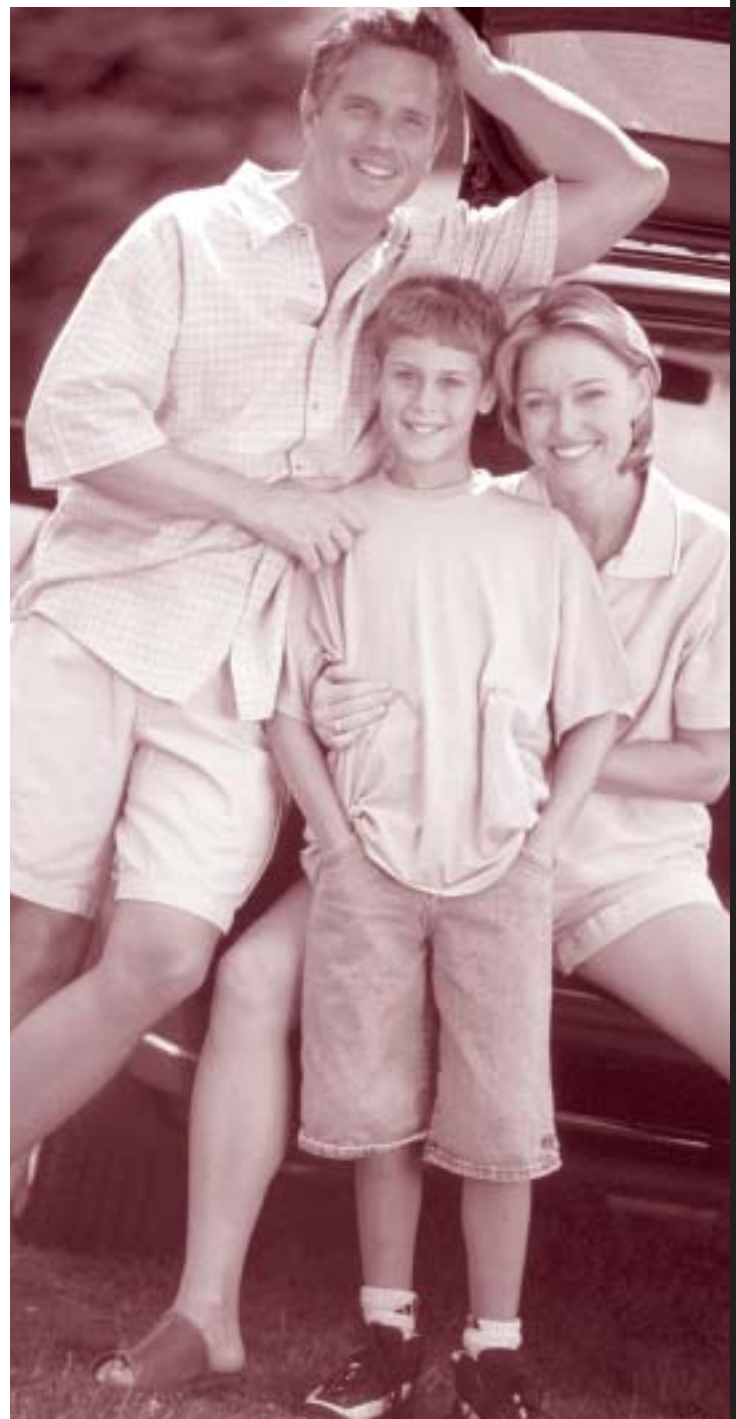
As a traffic safety advocate, you understand the tragic toll every one of these deaths has on families and communities nationwide. As these latest statistics indicate, too many Americans continue to make the wrong choice and drive impaired. Every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested yet only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of drinking and driving. As a result, one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime during their lifetime. The reality is that most impaired drivers arrive home safely and are never punished for their life-threatening crimes, which only reinforces their future decisions.

### **There is No Debate – Americans Support Getting Tough on Impaired Drivers**

Studies show that the majority of Americans consider impaired driving one of our nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view impaired driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols to ensure their safety.

We have reached a crossroads in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. If we're to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related injuries and fatalities, we must all do more to influence behavior

by changing the perception that impaired driving is merely a victimless traffic offense. We must all do more to raise awareness that impaired driving is a deadly crime that has severe personal consequences, and that will no longer be tolerated.



# Impaired Driving is a Deadly Threat to America's Families

## Keep Families Safe from Impaired Drivers – Join the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization

That's why NHTSA and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Sheriffs' Association, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association, Operation C.A.R.E, National District Attorneys' Association and National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators are asking you to help promote and take part in the National Mobilization this July 4th holiday.

Every July and December, *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilizations are conducted in conjunction with criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States. The goal is to build on the incredible momentum and the hard work already taking place in communities throughout America to stop impaired driving and save lives. The mobilizations occur in July and December for a reason – Summer is when alcohol-related crashes occur most frequently and December is an appropriate time to promote the issue, because of public perception that holiday celebrations increase the consumption of alcohol and impaired driving.

## Publicize What You're Already Doing

As with most States and communities, your partnership is already engaged in the fight against this deadly crime. By joining the mobilization, you will become part of a powerful voice that is reaching millions of Americans through national and local media and the Internet.

And as with any criminal offense, the best way to deter impaired driving is through a highly visible media campaign with the entire community and criminal justice system working together – enforcement, prosecution, adjudications and sanctions – to reinforce the message that violators are criminals and that there is a high risk of being caught, prosecuted and jailed.

You can use existing laws, such as administrative license revocation, .08 BAC, zero tolerance or vehicle confiscation laws, to show the consequences of impaired driving. Prosecutors and judges also can provide the court's perspective and explain what offenders can lose, not only in time away from work but in high fines and court costs.



## The Traffic Safety Advocate's Role

Each of us has a different role in the mobilization, yet the goal is the same – preventing impaired driving. As a community partner your role is crucial. A community's commitment to end impaired driving should involve a wide array of businesses, volunteers and civic groups. Contact groups already active in your community, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Destructive Decisions, the Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, religious groups, schools and PTAs and other organizations, and ask them to inform their members about the mobilization. These groups also can provide volunteer support for your local campaign.

Here are some ideas to involve the community:

- Host a town hall meeting on ways to reduce impaired driving.
- Publicly endorse the community's mobilization by sending letters to the editor of the local newspaper in support of local mobilizations.
- Work with area businesses and taxicab companies to create alternatives to impaired driving – implement sober ride and designated driver programs.
- Contact organizers of events where alcohol is a focus to distribute literature and encourage the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs.
- Conduct fundraising events (i.e., silent auctions, bake sales, pot luck dinners, etc.) to provide seed money for designated driver and sober ride programs or to purchase equipment for law enforcement.
- Provide volunteers to criminal justice partners to assist with publicity, administrative duties and operating sobriety checkpoints.
- Recruit family members of victims to participate in media outreach activities.
- Use newsletters to raise awareness of the consequences of impaired driving, share non-alcoholic drink recipes and provide safe hosting tips.
- Invite speakers to your meetings (law enforcement, emergency room doctors and nurses, victims, etc.) to speak about the dangers of impaired driving to increase support for your efforts. Local hospitals, fire and rescue officials or MADD chapters are excellent places to recruit speakers.

## Work with the Criminal Justice System to Get the Word Out

You cannot have an effective message of deterrence if the public doesn't know what your criminal justice partners are doing and the consequences for violating the law. Members of criminal justice agencies are more likely to participate in campaign activities if you remove obstacles that inhibit their participation. Make it easy and everyone will join the effort. Remind them that every law enforcement agency is legally able to conduct saturation patrols to catch and deter impaired drivers. Small- and large-scale sobriety checkpoints are allowed in most states and can serve as effective high profile deterrents. The good news is that most agencies are already arresting impaired drivers on a daily basis and will welcome your help in bringing greater visibility to their efforts.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Identify organizations that have missions and conduct similar outreach activities, get their advice and assistance in planning.
- Call a special meeting of criminal justice departmental and agency chiefs, sheriffs and trooper commands throughout the state. Ask them to take an active interest in the mobilization and encourage others to participate.
- Solicit input from prosecutors, judicial officials and law enforcement agencies on timing, strategies, and evaluation methods.
- Allow individual departments to devise targeted implementation activities for the mobilization.
- Make sure outside groups involved in the campaign have a law enforcement representative available who is familiar with the activities of the mobilization.
- Let judges and prosecutors know that there may be an initial increase in impaired driving arrests. Now that the BAC limit has changed from .10 to .08 in many States, cases that may have been "on the edge" of the limit can now be prosecuted fully.
- Distribute information on the change in the law to motorists. A good time to do this would be at a sobriety checkpoint or during a saturation patrol or at DMV locations.



[Your Letterhead]

For Immediate Release  
[Date]

Contact: [Name]  
[Phone]

[ORGANIZATION] Warns Motorist – *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*

## Unusually Long July 4th Holiday Could be Deadliest Ever

With more people expected to travel on America's highways during the extended Fourth of July holiday, this week could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.

To protect [CITY/TOWN] families during this long holiday period, [ORGANIZATION] will support [STATE/LOCAL AGENCY] efforts to protect citizens from impaired drivers. As part of the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization, local officials will conduct saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law.

"This Fourth of July [ORGANIZATION] will be working with [PARTNERS] to keep families safe from one of the greatest threats to our communities – Impaired drivers," said [LOCAL OFFICIAL]. "Impaired drivers are reckless criminals who kill every 32 minutes and injure someone every two minutes. Our message is a simple one – *You Drink and Drive. You Lose.* Violators can lose their license, time from work, and money in high fines and court costs, as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide."

After several years of improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show alcohol-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995, from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000.

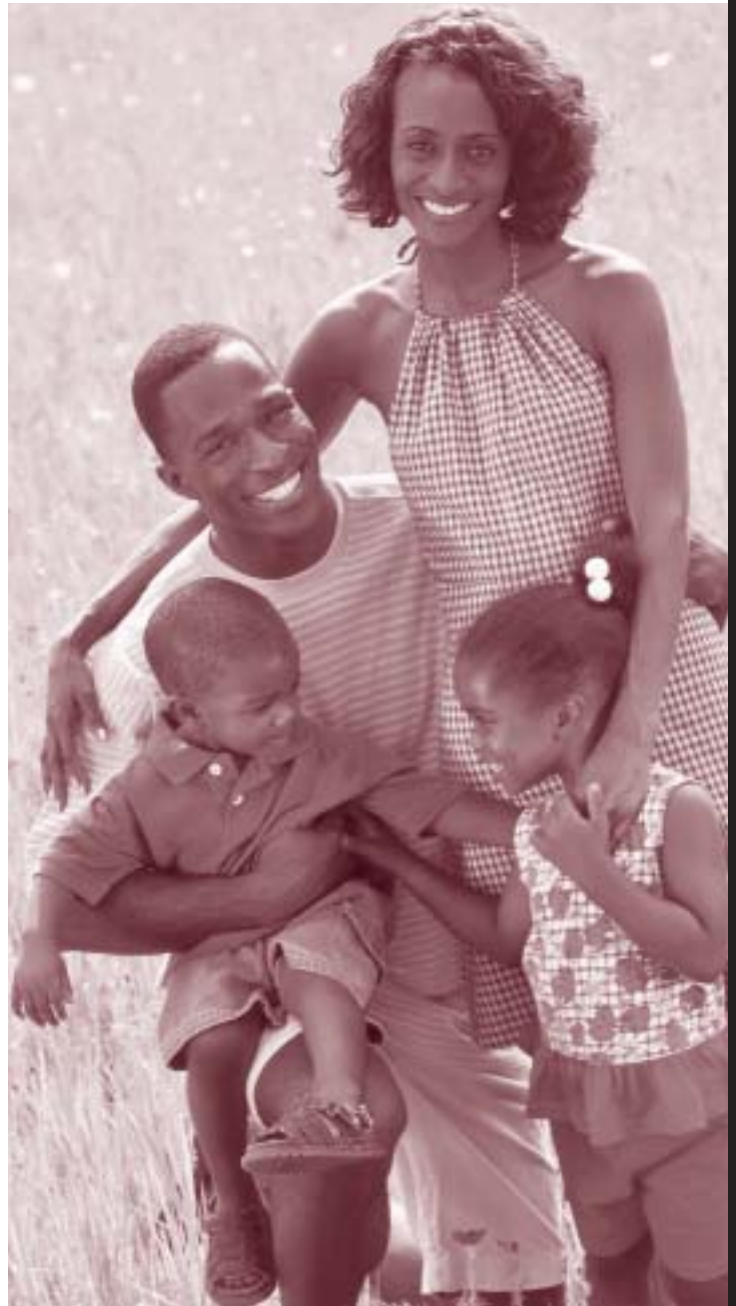
Studies from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of enforcement efforts like saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to protect innocent victims. Furthermore, two-thirds of Americans also strongly endorse the use of stricter and more severe penalties against drunk drivers.

Nine out of 10 Americans who participate in social events where alcohol is served feel that people should use designated drivers. [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] suggests that party hosts include alcohol-free beverages and protein-rich foods, along with reminding guest to plan ahead. [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] reminds everyone:

- Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink.
- Choose a sober designated driver.
- Take mass transit or a taxicab.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.

The *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* National Mobilization, launched in December 1999, is a comprehensive impaired driving prevention effort focused on highly visible criminal justice-related efforts to deter impaired driving and is designed for use by States and communities to save lives. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about our lifesaving message from their newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. For more information about the campaign, visit NHTSA's web site at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

- Every July 4th holiday, thousands of Americans chose to drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Impaired driving is no accident. It's a serious crime that kills every 32 minutes.
- After several years of improvement, more recent statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show impaired driving-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995 from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000.
- With more people expected to travel during this extended July 4th holiday, this week could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.
- This Fourth of July **[ORGANIZATION]** will be working with **[PARTNERS]** to keep families safe from one of the greatest threats to our communities – Impaired drivers.
- As part of the ***You Drink and Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization, law enforcement agencies will be conducting sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols and to identify and arrest impaired drivers.
- We are warning everyone – ***You Drink and Drive. You Lose.*** Violators will lose their license, automobile, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.
- As a community, we all support law enforcement efforts to protect us from theft, burglary and assault. Yet, many otherwise law-biding citizens continue to view impaired driving merely as a traffic offense. Don't be fooled. Impaired driving is no accident nor is it a victimless crime.
- Nationally, impaired driving-related fatalities are increasing, killing nearly 17,000 people each year. More than 300,000 people are injured.
- Although every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested, only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of drinking and driving. As a result one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime in their lifetime.
- We have reached a crossroads in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more if we are to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.



## Talking Points

- The key to stopping impaired driving is taking a community approach with law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officials and traffic safety partners, each doing their part, to protect innocent victims from impaired drivers.
- **[LOCAL ORGANIZATION]** is committed to making our neighborhoods safer and will be working with criminal justice officials to remind everyone:
  - ❑ Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink or use illegal drugs.
  - ❑ Choose a sober designated driver.
  - ❑ Take mass transit or a taxicab.
  - ❑ Spend the night where the activity is being held.
  - ❑ Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Studies show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education.
- Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving by others as a major threat to the community.
- The ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization campaign is a partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States that is committed to reducing deaths from impaired driving. Saturation patrols are increased enforcement efforts, often involving multiple agencies, that target a specific area to identify and arrest impaired drivers.
- At sobriety checkpoints, law enforcement officers evaluate drivers for signs of alcohol or drug impairment at certain points on the roadway. Vehicles are stopped in a specific sequence — such as every other or every fourth, fifth or sixth vehicle – depending on the staffing available and traffic conditions.
- Adequately publicized, saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints increase the perceived risk of arrest, influence drivers to make the right decision, and remind the general public that impaired driving is a crime.
- This Fourth of July, please celebrate responsibly and don't take a chance – because chances are – you will be caught. The choice is yours – designate a driver or **[LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY]** will appoint one for you – straight to jail.



This Fourth of July as you join your neighbors, family and friends to celebrate America's birth and our liberty, don't lose your freedom to impaired driving.

As a community we all support law enforcement efforts to protect us from theft, burglary and assault. Yet, many otherwise law-biding citizens continue to view impaired driving merely as a traffic offense. Don't be fooled. Impaired driving is no accident nor is it a victimless crime. Drunk drivers are reckless criminals who kill every 32 minutes.

This year the chances are even greater that you or someone you know will be affected. Because of the extended July 4th holiday period this year, [STATE/LOCAL ORGANIZATION] is expecting an increase in the number of impaired driving fatalities. This Fourth of July [ORGANIZATION] will be working with [PARTNERS] to keep families safe from one of the greatest threats to our communities – Impaired drivers. As part of the ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization, local officials will conduct sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law.

There will be no warnings this weekend. Our message is a simple one – ***You Drink and Drive. You Lose.*** Violators will lose their license, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.

After several years of improvement, more recent statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that impaired driving-related deaths increased for the first time since 1995 from 15,976 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more as communities and as individuals if we are to make significant declines in the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

That's why it's so important to celebrate sensibly. It takes just a little forethought to designate a sober driver before you celebrate. Barring that, use taxi services and other alternative transportation or if possible, spend the night rather than driving home impaired.

If you're hosting a party, accept responsibility for your guests' safety. Don't serve alcohol to underage guests or to anyone who has clearly "had enough." It's not just the conscientious thing to do; serving those who are underage is illegal, and serving anyone who is visibly intoxicated can leave you liable. Offer non-alcoholic beverages and protein-rich snacks. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends. Take the car keys away from any guest who is impaired; call a cab or ask a non-drinking guest to provide a safe ride home.

There is never enough help, and never too many voices. To learn how you can make a difference in [COMMUNITY], please contact [LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION].

This Fourth of July, don't lose your freedom to impaired driving. The choice is yours – designate a driver or [LOCAL ORGANIZATION] will appoint one for you – straight to jail.

### ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose. National Mobilization***

Launched in December 1999, the ***You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*** National Mobilization is a partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 States that is committed to reducing deaths from impaired driving. Thanks to the combined efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about the campaign from the newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. For more information about the National Mobilization, please visit [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

